PROMOTING YOUR PRESENCE AT THE SHOW

Exhibitor Journey to Success

Market your way to exhibition success
Exhibiting at a show is both a serious commitment and a major opportunity. It can be a very effective part of your marketing programme by focusing on promoting the benefits your customers and prospects will gain by meeting you at your stand.

This guide provides some simple tips on how to build a marketing plan that uses a variety of communication channels to reach and influence your target audience.

MEASURE YOUR OBJECTIVES
FREE PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL
PUBLIC RELATIONS
EMAIL MARKETING
SOCIAL MEDIA

FOCUSING ON PROMOTING THE BENEFITS YOUR CUSTOMERS AND PROSPECTS WILL GAIN

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MEASURE YOUR OBJECTIVES

Now that your stand is booked, and you know what you want to gain from exhibiting, it’s time to build a strong communication plan to help you to achieve your objectives.

To start things off, make your objectives measurable. If you want more leads, decide on how many you’d like. If your database needs a boost, work out how much it needs to grow. By doing this, you’ll easily be able to calculate your success. Make every team member fully aware of your targets, so that everyone understands their role in making them happen.
FREE PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

Complete your online profile
The Exhibitor List is the exhibition website’s most-viewed page, making it one of the best opportunities to get noticed by thousands of potential contacts.

Like a shop window, your online profile is the first impression visitors have of what you offer; take advantage of this great opportunity to stand out.

The checklist in the Exhibitor Zone highlights the elements of your online profile, and it provides step-by-step instructions to make things as easy as possible.

Promotional Material
Access the show promotional material from the Exhibitor Zone under ‘Promotional Material’.

Personally invite your customers and prospects to the show
Encourage your contacts to visit you at the show by sending them a personal invite. Either order printed invitations (where available) from the Exhibitor Zone, which we will post to you free of charge, or download the artwork.

Ask your sales team to take the invites to meetings with customers and prospects, and include the registration link in all your event promotions to make it easy for them to register. The link can be found on the event homepage behind the ‘Register/Get Your Free Ticket’ button.

Watch the video: Pre-marketing your exhibition presence

Use the event logo, web banners and footers
Display them across all of your digital communications, including emails, newsletters, social media channels and your website. Hyperlink them to the visitor registration page to make it easy for your customers to sign up.

Utilise a ready-made email campaign
Promote the event to your prospects by downloading, personalising and sending out the HTML email template we’ve created for you. This can be found in the Exhibitor Zone, and will give you a show-branded campaign completely free of charge.

Send us your press releases
Spread your news further by uploading your press releases to your profile via the Exhibitor Zone. Our PR company will then incorporate your news and special announcements into the show’s PR campaign.

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PUBLIC RELATIONS

How PR can benefit your brand

PR can greatly enhance your marketing campaigns. Where marketing is focused on promoting your products and services, ultimately leading to sales, PR is more focused on getting you seen as a trusted, reputable brand. And as your brand’s reputation grows, you’ll see that your sales take an upturn too.

Feature in the show’s own PR campaign

Increase the reach of your announcements by uploading your press releases to your profile on the show’s website. Also, get in touch with the show’s PR agency; where appropriate we will include your news into the show’s PR and marketing campaign that will reach thousands of relevant prospects.

You can find the agency contact details in the Exhibitor Zone → Promotional Material → PR.

Other PR hooks that work well are stories around deals you close at the exhibition; the perfect way to shout about how successful your show has been. Quotes of this nature can also be incorporated into our show reviews. This provides a platform for you to promote how you found the show and the results you gained.

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EMAIL MARKETING

Why email marketing is important

It gives you the opportunity to reach hundreds of contacts at once, and it offers your audience the convenience of reading when it suits them. The increase of smartphone users has morphed email into an agile, responsive marketing channel. Make your email campaign cost and time effective by downloading a ready-made email template from the Exhibitor Zone.

Your email marketing timeline:

BEFORE THE EVENT

2 months before:
Email customers and prospects with relevant, interesting news and announcements... but not invitations to the show.

3 weeks before:
Set up on-stand meetings. Only offer a few time slots to create a sense of urgency.

3 months before:
Organise your value-based email content plan – make a list of all the unique messages you want to communicate to your audience.

1 month before:
Promote what you’re doing at the show – new releases, special events, cocktail hours – whatever you’re doing to stand out.

1 week before:
Save your best content for last and announce it now – Maybe you’re launching a new product or have an exclusive prize to give away onsite. Announce it now.

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EMAIL MARKETING

Your email-marketing timeline:

AFTER THE EVENT

2 months before:
Build solid interest – Use your customer knowledge gained from conversations at the show or from your first follow-up email to make the content relevant.

1 day after the show:
Send a ‘nice to meet you email’, and link it to a web form asking for more information about them. Leverage this to find out their product requirements and purchase intent.

1 day after the show:
Set up follow-up campaigns based on their response to the previous campaign – Most email platforms have campaign automation settings, use these to cover the potential user journeys, e.g. clicked, non-opens, etc.
EMAIL MARKETING

How to create enticing subject lines

Your email’s subject line gives you a great opportunity to intrigue your contacts instantly.

5 STEPS
To creating a subject line that readers will click rather than skip:

1 Write it first. Write your subject line early on, and then make sure the content is consistent.

2 Make it snappy. First, you’ll need to ensure that your whole subject line is visible in the recipients’ inboxes. Second, you’ll want to include the key point of the email to give the reader enough curiosity to click through.

3 Treat your subject lines as ‘mini ads’ by mentioning your key USPs over and over in your campaign. Even those who don’t click through will still become aware of your USPs, and may think of you if they do look for services such as yours in the future.

4 Try personalising. Including the recipient’s personal or company name can drastically improve results.

5 Use a split test to try out different wording, lengths and personalisation options. Nearly every email platform should offer substantial split-testing capabilities.

4 TOP TIPS
For creating marketing emails that people will want to read:

1 Make your emails responsive. Roughly half of emails are opened on mobile devices. Dwell time is decreasing, but this doesn’t mean your content isn’t being digested. Design your emails to be compatible with different devices so they are readable universally.

2 Resend to non-openers. This is a simple strategy that increases response rates. A couple of days after your email is sent, simply resend the same message to those who didn’t open the first time. You’ll be amazed with the results.

3 Experiment with short vs. long copy. Some audiences respond better to long, detailed content, and others to short, to-the-point messaging. Of course, subject matter can also be a factor. Test both options with your audience, and see what works for them.

4 Include images if they add value. Relevant, eye-catching images can be used to illustrate your points, advertise your products or services, or simply break up longer email content.

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3 Ways Social Media Can Help Your Business

> Builds stronger relationships
Identify and build a picture of your target audience and stakeholders and create high-quality, targeted content based around their interests and industry trends.

> Gives you market and customer intelligence
Social media can act as the eyes and ears of your organisation. By following a range of relevant influencers, you’ll keep up with the latest news and trends.

> Provides a great way to search for leads
Use the ‘search’ functions on social media sites to seek out potential customers. Offer market insight and information that’ll help your audience, rather than approaching them with a hard sales offer.

Here are a few tips to get the most out of social media:

> Create a content strategy. Find out what your target audience is interested in: their challenges, the industry trends, the buying patterns.

> Then plan:
> How you can turn these interests into good content: blogs, video blogs, infographics.
> What platforms you’ll share your content on; e.g. your own website blog, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc.
> When you’ll share your content; e.g. 1 blog a week, 3 Twitter posts spaced out across a day.

> Establish a style guide. Develop a clear tone of voice, wording, manner and style, so no matter which staff member is speaking, your brand message is consistent.

> Be recognised as an active member.
Using social media just to promote your own brand is generally frowned upon, so get involved and take an interest in other people’s content too.

> Use call to actions. Social media is more about conversations than sales pitches, but a clear, simple and relevant call to action is acceptable.
SOCIAL MEDIA

Here are some key stats on the most commonly used channels:

1 BILLION+
ACTIVE USERS, WHOSE MOST COMMON REASON FOR UNLIKING A BRAND IS ‘UNINTERESTING POSTS’

320 MILLION
74% OF WHICH FOLLOW SMES TO GET PRODUCT UPDATES

347 MILLION
ACTIVE MEMBERS WORLDWIDE, WITH THE UK RANKING AS THE FIRST PLACE FOR NUMBER OF USERS IN EUROPE

1 BILLION+
USERS AND 50% YOY INCREASE OF MONTHLY HOURS SPENT WATCHING CONTENT ON YOUTUBE

100 MILLION
USERS, 83% OF ACTIVE USERS PREFER TO FOLLOW A BRAND THAN A NOTABLE CELEBRITY

500 MILLION
ACTIVE MONTHLY USERS, INSTAGRAM USERS HAVE SHARED OVER 40 BILLION PHOTOS TO DATE AND SHARE AN AVERAGE OF 95 MILLION PHOTOS AND VIDEOS PER DAY

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SOCIAL MEDIA

Get the most from each platform.

While all social media platforms essentially do the same thing – connect you to your customers and peers – each one does so very differently. The key is to focus on those platforms used by your customers.

**BLOGGING**

- **Give an opinion.** Once you’ve found out your target audience’s interests, share your own thoughts on relevant news and trends.
- **Create a blog calendar.** This is useful as you can begin to schedule blogs to run alongside email and social media campaigns, which will create consistent themes throughout your online marketing plans.

**TWEETING**

- **Customer service.** People tend to use social media to get in touch regarding queries and complaints. Twitter is an ideal platform to show how good your customer care is by allowing you to resolve customer issues in real time.
- **Encourage retweets.** Always include a link that people can click on for more information. Whenever possible, restrict your tweets to no more than 100 characters. This makes it easier for people to retweet your updates to their own followers.

**LINKEDIN**

- **Create an industry LinkedIn group.** Creating an official brand group will give you a platform to demonstrate thought leadership in your industry. It can help you grow a community of followers, generate new content ideas and even new leads.
- **Promote and engage within 3rd-party groups.** LinkedIn Group Statistics are a good place to start as they will tell you how many members are in a group and how active it is.

**PINTEREST**

- **Boost traffic back to your website.** Add your URL to all your pins to drive traffic back to your website. Bear in mind that Pinterest uses Twitter hashtags, which makes it easy to combine your Pinterest and Twitter strategies into one.
SOCIAL MEDIA

How to use social media before, during and after the event

Ensure your pre-show marketing messages are seen far and wide by strategically using social media platforms to build excitement and engagement.

BEFORE THE EVENT

Create a buzz about your stand in the lead-up to the event.

Plan

Get everything organised in advance, including who’s going to do what and when, and make sure your signage, literature, and presentations all include the URLs of your social channels.

Think about what KPIs are relevant to your business and use tracking software such as Google Analytics to monitor referrals and conversions from your social channels.

Use scheduling software that lets you manage your social media accounts through a single interface. You can schedule automatic updates/tweets, manage all your connections, and set up streams based on keywords or lists.

Engage

Like and follow the event, visitors and other attending brands on Facebook and Twitter and other social media channels you have in common. Tweet, share and retweet show updates, and make sure you use the event hashtag on Twitter to give your tweets wider reach.

Create a Facebook event and invite people to attend, making sure to encourage them to ‘check in’ on the day. Post details of where you’ll be at the event, what you’ll be doing, and what visitors can look forward to. Use the ‘question’ option on Facebook to conduct interactive mini-surveys, prize draws, and exclusive discounts. Make sure the incentive is linked directly to making contact with your business during the event.

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SOCIAL MEDIA

DURING THE EVENT
Keep the momentum going throughout the show.

Interact
Post frequent updates about what’s happening during the event, including photos and short video clips. Invite people to tag themselves in your photos and to upload their own photos to your Facebook wall. Keep up with the conversations; after each event, speaker, or interesting discussion, tweet your comments using relevant hashtags.

Meet face to face with event visitors you’ve talked to through social media. They’re likely to be your most engaged customers and prospects.

Connect
Exchange Twitter handles when you meet new contacts at the event; this allows you to easily keep in contact with them in the future.

Record who you’ve met at the event, and join the dots between contacts, incentives, visitors, and outcomes. To save yourself time make use of the visitor management service provided by our partner N200 l GES. You’ll be able to capture and rate each visitor by simply scanning their badge, making following-up a breeze. Make sure that every staff member knows how to use the scanners and that every visitor is scanned.

Integrate PR with social media. Journalists monitor tools such as Twitter to source new stories, so post content, photos and videos about any events or briefings you have planned. And remember to use the event hashtag.

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SOCIAL MEDIA

AFTER THE EVENT

Once the event is over, but before the dust has settled, there are still plenty of opportunities for social media interaction and engagement.

Follow up

Stay fresh in new contacts’ minds, and ‘friend’, ‘like’, ‘follow’, and connect with everyone you met at the event. The sooner you follow up with them, the more likely your connections will remember the conversations you had at the show and this will help you build a relationship with them.

Continue the buzz

Upload more photos and video clips, ask for feedback about the event from your social audience and share your thoughts and observations. And while the enthusiasm is still bubbling, start creating excitement about your next event.

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